

Supreme Court

1st and East Capitol Streets, N.E.

Northeast Washington, D.C.

Metro Stops: South Capitol or Union Station



The [U.S. Supreme Court](#) is the Judicial Branch in the balance of power of our federal government. It is the highest court in the land, where the nine presidential-appointed Justices rule on Constitutional matters.

The Supreme Court lived a somewhat nomadic existence with no permanent residence from its first session in 1790 until the Congress authorized a permanent home for the Court in 1929. The building was constructed from 1932 to 1935.

Beginning the first Monday in October, the Court generally hears up to two one-hour arguments a day, at 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., with occasional afternoon sessions scheduled as necessary. Arguments are held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays in two-week intervals through late April (with longer breaks during December and February).

Visitors are welcome to attend oral arguments, but seating is limited and on a first-come, first-served basis. Before a session begins, two lines form on the plaza in front of the building.

One is for those who wish to attend an entire argument. The other is a 3-minute line for those who wish to observe the Court in session for a brief time. The locations for these lines are marked with signs and there is a police officer on duty to answer your questions. Seating for the first line begins at 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Seating for the 3-minute line begins at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

In mid-May, after the oral argument portion of the Term has concluded, the Court takes the Bench Mondays at 10:00 a.m. for the release of orders and opinions. This practice continues until all the cases heard during the Term are decided, usually the last week in June. These sessions typically last between 15 and 30 minutes and are open to the public.

The Supreme Court offers a variety of education programs. Exhibits, which are changed periodically, and a theater, where a film on the Supreme Court is shown, are located on the ground floor. Lectures in the Courtroom are typically given every hour on the half-hour, on the days the Court is not sitting, beginning at 9:30 a.m. and concluding at 3:30 p.m.

Exhibits on the main level are available for self-guided touring Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except on federal holidays.

Times of Operation

The Supreme Court building is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays. The business of the Court or unforeseen factors, such as inclement weather, may affect public access to the building. To obtain updated information on visiting the Court, including any schedule changes, call (202) 479-3211.

[Congressional Reserved Tour Information](#)

Supreme Court Links

- [Supreme Court Website](#)

- [Visitor's Information, including Accessibility](#)
- [Architectural Information](#)
- [Court Photographs](#)

Places of Interest Nearby

- [Sewall-Belmont House](#)
- [Library of Congress](#)
- [Folger Shakespeare Library](#)
- [U.S. Capitol](#)
- [U.S. Botanic Garden](#)
- [Union Station](#)

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